

**Andrew Jackson to Rachel Donelson Jackson,  
December 21, 1823, from Correspondence of Andrew  
Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.**

**TO MRS. JACKSON.**

Washington, December 21, 1823.

*My Dear Wife*, I have received to day your kind letter of the 5th instant, and am rejoiced to be informed that you are in good health. I can say with truth that my health is improved. The kind attention of my friend Eaton has been great, and to him I feel truly indebted for the comfortable quarters we occupy. We are in the family of Mr. Oneal whose amiable pious wife and two daughters, one married the other single,<sup>1</sup> take every pains in there power to make us comfortable and agreeable, Mr Oneal himself is an agreeable man. this family has been wealthy but by misfortune and endorments for others, has been reduced to the necessity of keeping a boarding house. I can with truth say I never was in a more agreeable and worthy family. When we have a leisure hour in the evening we spend it with the family. Mrs. Timberlake the maryed daughter whose husband belongs to our Navy, plays on the Piano delightfully, and every Sunday evening entertains her pious mother with sacred music, to which we are invited, and the single daughter who is also pious and sings well unites in the music. I am thus particular in giving you a narative of our situation with which I know you will be pleased.

1 The married daughter, Mrs. Timberlake (Peggy O'Neal) figured largely in the political history of a later time as Mrs. John H. Eaton.

Every Sunday we spend at church. This family belong to the methodist society.<sup>2</sup> on last Sunday as I named to you I went with Mrs Watson to her church, she belongs to the

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Presbeterians, to day I went to hear a Baptist whose church is near us, and was edified by a good concise discourse, so my dear you see, that notwithstanding I am in the midst of intrigue, gaiety and bustle, I spend my Sundays and leisure hours agreeably, and I hope profitably. as to Leisure, I have but little, and could I get clear of the dining parties, I think with care, I can maintain my health, but under existing circumstances, I cannot yet, (untill I go the rounds) refuse;

2 On Mr. O'Neal's Methodism see Edward Hooker (1808) in Am. Hist. Assoc., *Annual Report*, 1896, I. 927.

The president is very kind to me; indeed amidst the intrigue for the next presidency here, I get on pretty well, as I touch not, handle not of that unclean procedure; I keep myself entirely aloof from the intriguers, and caucus mongers, with a determination that if I am brought into that office it shall be by the free unsolicited voice of the people. I trust that the god of Isaac and of Jacob will protect you, and give you health in my absence, in him alone we ought to trust, he alone can preserve, and guide us through this troublesome world, and I am sure he will hear your prayers. We are told that the prayers of the righteous prevaieth much, and I add mine for your health and preservation untill we again meet. Major Davenport<sup>3</sup> is now with us with his young and amiable wife that he has lately married in Philadelphia, he has given this family your character, and Mrs. Timberlake (from what she has heard of you from Major Eaton and Major Davenport) has requested me to present you with her respects, when you come here I am convinced you will be much pleased with this family.

3 Brevet Maj. William Davenport, 7th Infantry.

The only consolation to friends who are seperated, is the pleasure of communicating with each other by writing, how gratefull this converse between husband and wife. I will therefore, as you have requested me, endeavour to content myself through this winters absence, endeavouring by occasionally writing you, to console myself, and expecting often

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to hear from you. I have recd the letter from my son, I have read it with great pleasure and have answered it, which I enclose. I hope in the next to see his handwriting improve. I feel gratefull to our cousin Milburry for her staying with you, and the other ladies for visitting you, I hope their cheerfull dispositions will keep your spirits up. I am much pleased with the information of my crop, and the forwardness with which Mr Parsons has got it. I hope before the cold weather sets in he will have it housed, and ready for markett. The weather here has been very fine for the season altho very variable.

Capt A. J. Donelson writes me often. present me to him affectionately and to the Andrews and Miss Milbury if with you and all friends. I have wrote Colo Butler today and regret much that he has been unwell. I hope he has recovered, I have recd from my friend Parson Hume, a kind letter; in my answer, I have requested him to visit you, in your next advise me how the church progresses.<sup>4</sup> I hope it is finished, present me to Col Ward and family, and say to him I expect he will attend to it, that it must be finished if him and myself pay for it. it is late and I must close this letter, accept of my prayers for your happiness and preservation untill we again shall meet, and believe me to be your affectionate Husband

<sup>4</sup> This is the church erected near the Hermitage by Jackson and his neighbors.